GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report
Golf Club Margara

Prepared by Independent Verifier, Paolo Croce

Certified by GEO Foundation: October 2019
Valid until: October 2022

GEO Foundation
Sustainability in and through golf

“In the last few years the club has taken a long road with the aim to improve its environmental performance. Talking just the course maintenance, the club has inverted its management in terms of water, fertilisers and pesticides consumption. A new policy was introduced to adopt the best environmental solutions with the purpose to save resources and money and to offer a much more sustainable course to members and visitors.”

Paolo Croce

GEO accredited Independent Verifier

Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Golf Club Margara has successfully achieved GEO Certified® status for its outstanding work to foster nature, conserve resources and support the community.

GEO Certified® is the most respected certification for golf, based on a credibly and transparently developed modern sustainability Standard of best practice.

Golf Club Margara has:

1. Met the required certification criteria for sustainable golf operations
2. Successfully completed the official third-party verification process
3. Successfully passed the final evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd. (autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation)

GEO agreed with the conclusions of the official verification report, that, having achieved all mandatory criteria; and with specific Continual Improvement Points set for the future, Golf Club Margara should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Golf Club Margara can therefore claim a position as a leader in advancing sustainability in golf – making important contributions in protecting nature, conserving resources and strengthening communities.

The GEO Certified® Report that follows comments on the actions undertaken against the criteria, as observed by the Independent Verifier during the assurance process.

Certification is nearly always the result of a dedicated team effort resulting in many practical and valuable social and environmental results around the golf course, maintenance facility and clubhouse. These dedication and leadership qualities are an important part of ensuring the resilience of the golf facility and the golf industry into the future and also as part of society's wider effort to pull together for people and planet.

We congratulate all involved.

Jonathan Smith
Founder and Executive Director, GEO Foundation
GEO Certification Ltd. Board Member

Kelli Jerome
Executive Director, GEO Foundation

Richard Allison
Manager, GEO Certified Facilities

Verification and Certification

Verification

The official third-party audit was carried out by an independent verifier, accredited by GEO to undertake verifications of golf facilities applying for certification.

Verification involves reviewing practices and data, using the International Voluntary Standard for Sustainable Golf Operations as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance. A detailed verification report is submitted for evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd, a subsidiary of GEO Foundation.

Certification

GEO Certification Ltd, an autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation [both not-for-profit entities], undertook a full review of all content submitted through the OnCourse® online platform and the report submitted by the verifier, ensuring:

- Comprehensiveness – that activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Standard
- Consistency – that the verification approach was balanced, well weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across each theme
- Accuracy - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the golf facility to ensure statements and claims were accurate

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit founded to advocate, support and reward sustainability in and through golf. Over more than ten years, the group has worked collaboratively with dozens of golf industry associations and government and non-government organisations around the world, to help golf become a sustainability leader, striving for a net positive social and environmental impact. In addition to managing and assuring GEO Certified®, GEO Foundation also provides a suite of credible, practical programmes for golf facility management, new golf developments and golf tournaments called OnCourse®, often delivered in partnership with national golf bodies. Find out more at **www.sustainable.golf**

Credibility

GEO Certified® is part of the ISEAL Alliance, a group of the world's foremost credible certification systems including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council and many others. GEO Foundation earned and retains full membership of the ISEAL Alliance global association following a rigorous evaluation against the ISEAL Codes of Credibility in Sustainability Standards and Certification. The ISEAL Codes cover standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Find out more at **www.isealalliance.org**

The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	• Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	• Water • Energy • Materials
Community	• Partnerships & Outreach • Golfing & Employment • Advocacy & Communications

Included below are the observations made by the Independent Verifier against each item in the Standard.

NATURE

N1 Habitats and Biodiversity

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	**N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site**	**(Course management)** Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity	Confirmed. The availability of maps and photos of biodiversity inside the course (water bodies) is confirmed. The club did not produce any survey documents, however, there

			surveys	is informal knowledge of the site throughout the management. As a continual improvement the club should produce an audit of the landscape and biodiversity. The club is inside a property of more than 125 ha. It is located in a countryside quite far from urban areas. Around the property there are many farms producing cereals and forage. Inside the two golfcourses (18 holes Glauco Lolli Ghetti and 18 holes La Guazzetta) grassland areas are spaced out with small woods. Several surfaces are leaved completely uncultivated. This, and the presence of a few open waters (basins and natural lakes) has allowed to create natural corridors between habitats.
		N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	**(Course management)** Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	The site is not inside a protected landscape and there are not protected species inside the property. There are no legal requirements in the area.
		N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	**(Course management)** Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	The site is a typical country side. The old farm of the first years of the last century is now the clubhouse and dormy house and the old crops of cereals are now the golf holes. There are no legal requirements in the area.
	N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	**N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass**	**(Course / club management)** Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	The area of managed turfgrass takes account of the average player requirement., but now the greenkeeper is free to adopt the best solutions to minimise the playing surface.
	N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	**N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf**	**(Course management)** Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	There is not a true project, but the management is now involved in protecting habitats and increasing wildlife. The club management is now agree to give the priority to native species when planting or landscaping.
	N1.4 Conserve key species	**N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species**		All the trees of the property are now under investigation to verify their stability.

N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health	**N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors**	**(Course management)** Select appropriate grass species for climate	Considering the year of construction (1972), the latitude and the climate the selection of cool season turfgrasses was the best option they could do. Greens and collars have a dominant presence of bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), tees and fairways a mix of bentgrass, Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*). In the rough there is a mix of fine and hard fescue with ryegrass and bluegrasses. Coming to the present day, climate change of the last years and the favourable exposure (with just a few shaded areas) can suggest to test the introduction of warmseason grasses in some areas (tees and fairways). The greenkeeper is going to test bermuda in a small portion of the practice area in the next year.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		The superintendent is an expert of the sector and he has a very good technical approach in maintaining the turf. Therefore he tends to favour preventive agronomic techniques to biotic and abiotic adversities (verticuttings, topdressings, corings, vertidrainings, ecc). The addition of sand to control the thatch and favour the levelling of turf is high (about 350 t/year).
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	**(Course management)** Soil tests and nutrient analysis	Soil test and nutrient analysis are required every three years, and they are the basis of the greenkeeper's strategy of fertilization. In the last years the consume of N (60 kg/ha/year), P (5 kg/ha/year) and K (22 kg/ha/year) is much below the average of consumption of the agricultural lands of the area (N= 156 kg/ha/year; P= 57 kg/ha/year; K= 73 kg/ha/year).
N2.2 Prioritise cultural management	**N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management**	**(Course management)** Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	The best option to minimize the use of chemicals is increasing the turf cultivation frequency, removing dew with pooling, controlling the weeds by hand on greens/collars (and also with grooming). Mowing blades are sharpened on a regular basis
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	**N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues**	**(Course management)** Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases; Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease; Accurate pest and disease identification; Map and track pest and disease hotspots; Establish pest and disease thresholds	Confirmed. Because the PAN (Piano di Azione Nazionale) application the club does not treat the turf with pesticides usually. The use of pesticides is limited to the periods allowed by the derogations permitted according the PAN and it takes place during specific timeframes to control Dollar spot (*Sclerotinia homoecarpa*) and monocotyledonous weeds (*Eleusine indica, Setaria spp, Digitaria spp*).

			Confirmed. The course is daily scouted to check pests and diseases and the disease hotspots have been identified by the head greenkeeper.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	**(Course management)** Use only legally registered and approved products; Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf	See above Confirmed. All the members of the maintenance staff are qualified and licensed. They are using appropriate protective equipment. The application equipment (sprayers, tank, nozzles) is calibrated regularly. The whole product is used for the required application thanks to an accurate calibration Using a computerized liquid distribution there is no leftover product usually.
N3 Pollution Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	**N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations**	**(Course management)** Document procedures for emergency spill responses; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.	Confirmed. Spillage risks are reduced by the presence of an impervious surface with collection grates Not confirmed. There are no maps showing buffer zones and no spray areas, however, other maps are available. As a continual improvement the club should develop the site mapping Spraying and spreading buffer zones is variable from 3 to 5 metres wide from the water bodies
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from	**(Club management)** Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste	Confirmed

		clubhouse operations	and waste water discharge	Confirmed
		N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	**(Course management)** Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces; Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Confirmed. The maintenance facility is realised according the Italian laws. Confirmed Hazardous materials are disposed according to the local laws Also the washing machines pad is realised according the local laws.
	N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	**N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances**	**(Course management)** Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff; Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building; Sufficient storage capacity; Impermeable flooring; Spill containment kits present; Emergency wash area; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area; Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks	Confirmed Usually in this country the storage tanks are licensed and controlled just after the manufacturing, not during their use. All the hazardous materials are stored in a safe way. There is an evacuation plan. Washing machine area is on an impermeable surface. Petrol is stored in appropriate tanks. Fire extinguishers are checked following the legislation and they have been installed in adequate numbers and positions Secondary containment for fuel doesn't occur
	N3.3 Responsibly	**N3.3.1 Appropriate waste**	**(Course management)** Waste water	Confirmed

	manage waste / storm water	**water usage and discharge licences**	discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	The wash pad is realised according the local laws. This means oils, greases, clippings, leaves, are separated. Waste water is connected to the local purification plant.

RESOURCES

R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
R1.1 Minimise water demand	**R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water**	**(Course management)** Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	The club is going to test the pedoclimatic adaptation of warmseason grasses for tees and fairways. For this reason a whole hole will be transplanted next year. The practice of syringing is a standard on this golf course. The annual average water consumption is about 230,000 m³ with a rate of 1,840 m³/ha/ye (2,438 m³/ha/ye is the average of crops consumption in the area).
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	**R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course**	**(Course management)** Conduct regular irrigation performance checks; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Ensure effective application of water to target areas; Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis	Soil moisture sensors not present, however, management is well informed about water use and carrying out best practices. As a continual improvement the club should purchase a TDR sensor Confirmed. Site Pro Toro Software The hardware is frequently verified. There one member of the maintenance staff applied on this duty. Application of water is limited only to greens/collars, tees, fairways and semi-rough. Secondary rough is not irrigated. The software is operated by a pluviometer able to check the amount of rainfall and eventually to stop the irrigation system.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to	**(Club management)**	Confirmed. Water auditing procedures are operated yearly with

		use water more efficiently in buildings	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	the aim to check problems and saving water and money eventually. Confirmed. Irrigation system for the course has a separate counter from the clubhouse one
	R1.3 Source water responsibly	**R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water**	**(Course / club management)** Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	Confirmed. Water abstraction permits are concerning the wells.
	R2 Energy			
	R2.1 Reduce energy demand	**R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance**	**(Course management)** Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	Considering the total surface of the property (125 ha), the playing surface is only 50 ha and the irrigated area only 30 ha. At this latitude and with the current climatic change we can say the managed turf is minimised.
	R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	**R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings**	**(Club management)** Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	Confirmed energy auditing procedures and data management to check for irregularities. Confirmed.
	R2.3 Source energy responsibly	**R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy**	**(Club management)** Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	At the moment no renewable forms of energy actually exist but there is a project to install a solar and photovoltaic system on the maintenance facility roof. The club is waiting for the approval by the local authorities
	R3 Materials			
	R3.1 Reduce materials demand	**R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives**	**(Club management)** Undertake a review of materials consumed	Confirmed waste auditing procedures following the local laws collection. On the course clipping is returned to the turf, but the maintenance staff is involved in recycling other materials (i.e. leaves, trees) to produce organic compost. The reuse of sand, soil, cores is the standard

R3.2 Purchase responsibly	**R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy**	**(Club management)** Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials	Eco friendly cleaning products used and local seasonal produce on menu. A formal document for the club would be a good improvement
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	**R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity**	**(Club management)** Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	Confirmed waste auditing and separation, but only around the maintenance facility and clubhouse
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	**R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations**	**(Club management)** Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste;	Confirmed presence of a contractor and trade waste licence. Invoice are payed following local laws twice a year

COMMUNITY

C1 Outreach

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality	**C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility**		Inside the property there are walking, biking and nature trails. The club provide signs to welcome visitors to the golf club and explaining access rights and where to cross the course.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	**C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes**		During professional events like the Italian Challenge Opens or Alps Tour Opens, volunteers are involved to support the staff. The club hosts tournaments which donate funds to selected charities. The club also offers the use of function rooms and other facilities to charity.

	C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	**C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups**	**(Club management)** Create a 'sustainability working group'	The club also offers the use of function rooms and other facilities to charity or to the community needs.
	C2 Golfers & Employees			
	C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	**C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities**		
	C2.2 Be open and inclusive	**C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies**	**(Club management)** Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	There is not a policy statement, but the club joined the IGF initiative on “Golf is woman” (a project to engage women to start playing golf)
	C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	**C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development**	**(Club management)** Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	Confirmed. Following the national legislation and the National School of Golf the employees follow continual professional development.
	C3 Communications			
	C3.1 Engage golfers and members	**C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors**	**(Club management)** Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	Course signage. See above C1
	C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	**C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community**	**(Club management)** Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	8 charities supported and money raised annually. See above C1

Golf and Sustainability

Among all sports, golf has a particularly close relationship with the environment and communities, golf facilities can bring many benefits to people and nature - from the protection of greenspace and conservation of biodiversity; healthy recreation for all ages; local supply chains; and jobs, tourism and other forms of economic value.

Adopting a more sustainable approach is also good for golf. It's about presenting a high-quality golf course and providing a memorable experience in natural surroundings. It's about being as efficient as possible. And it's about supporting the community in a range of ways that bring increased recognition, respect and contact.

At a broader level, it's important that golf credibly demonstrates its commitment, and its social and environmental value – strengthening the sport's image and reputation for the long term.

Golf facilities that participate in OnCourse®, an international sustainability initiative assured by the non-profit GEO Foundation, are taking a comprehensive approach and striving to be leaders in the community.

Find out more at www.sustainable.golf